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Miura et al.

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(54) **SHEET CONVEYING DEVICE AND IMAGE READING DEVICE**

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CPC ***B65H 29/22*** (2013.01); ***B65H 1/04*** (2013.01); ***B65H 3/06*** (2013.01); ***B65H 3/0684*** (2013.01); ***B65H 3/68*** (2013.01); ***B65H 5/062*** (2013.01); ***B65H 29/14*** (2013.01); ***B65H 31/02*** (2013.01); *B65H 3/5223* (2013.01); *B65H 3/5238* (2013.01); *B65H 2301/4212* (2013.01); *B65H 2301/4213* (2013.01); *B65H 2402/46* (2013.01); *B65H 2404/1531* (2013.01); *B65H 2404/6111* (2013.01); *B65H 2405/115* (2013.01);
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(58) **Field of Classification Search**
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USPC 271/171
See application file for complete search history.

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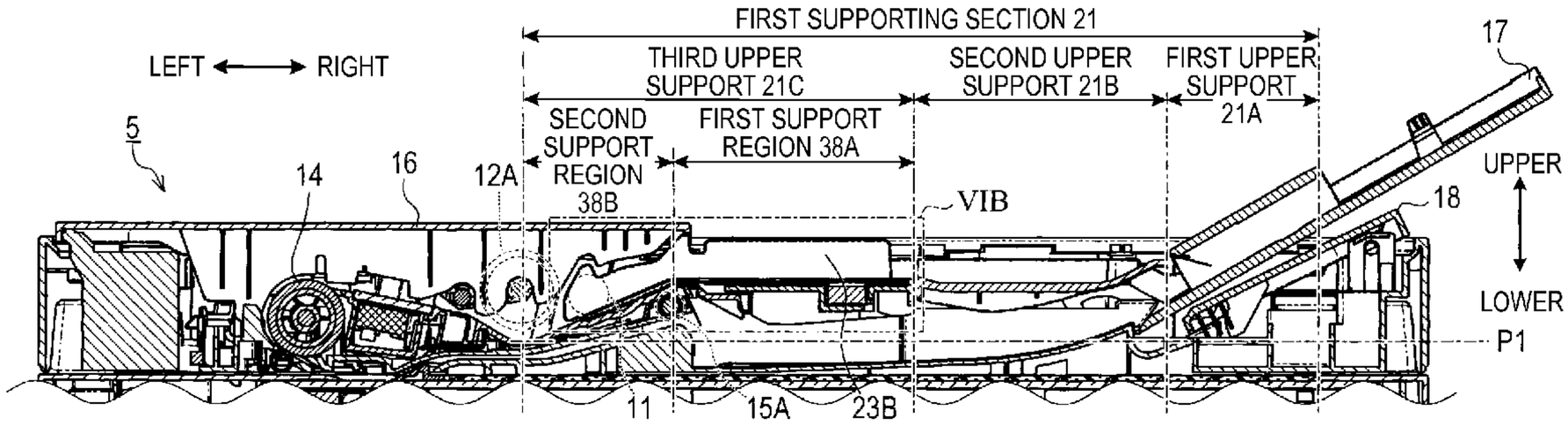
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A sheet conveying device includes a conveyor, a supporting section which supports a sheet to be fed to the conveyor and a guide section which is provided on the supporting section and configured to guide a sheet to the conveyor. The supporting section includes a first support region and a second support region which support a sheet. The first support region is provided at a position on an upstream side from the second support region in a sheet conveyance direction. The first support region extends substantially horizontally, and the second support region is inclined in a lower direction toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction. The guide section includes a first portion which extends substantially horizontally along the first support region, and a second portion which is connected to the first portion and extends obliquely in the lower direction along the second support region.

12 Claims, 10 Drawing Sheets



(51) **Int. Cl.**

B65H 3/06	(2006.01)
B65H 3/68	(2006.01)
B65H 5/06	(2006.01)
B65H 29/14	(2006.01)
B65H 31/02	(2006.01)
B65H 3/52	(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC *B65H2405/1111* (2013.01); *B65H 2405/111646* (2013.01); *B65H 2405/324* (2013.01); *B65H 2405/3321* (2013.01); *B65H 2511/12* (2013.01); *B65H 2511/22* (2013.01); *B65H 2801/06* (2013.01); *B65H 2801/39* (2013.01)

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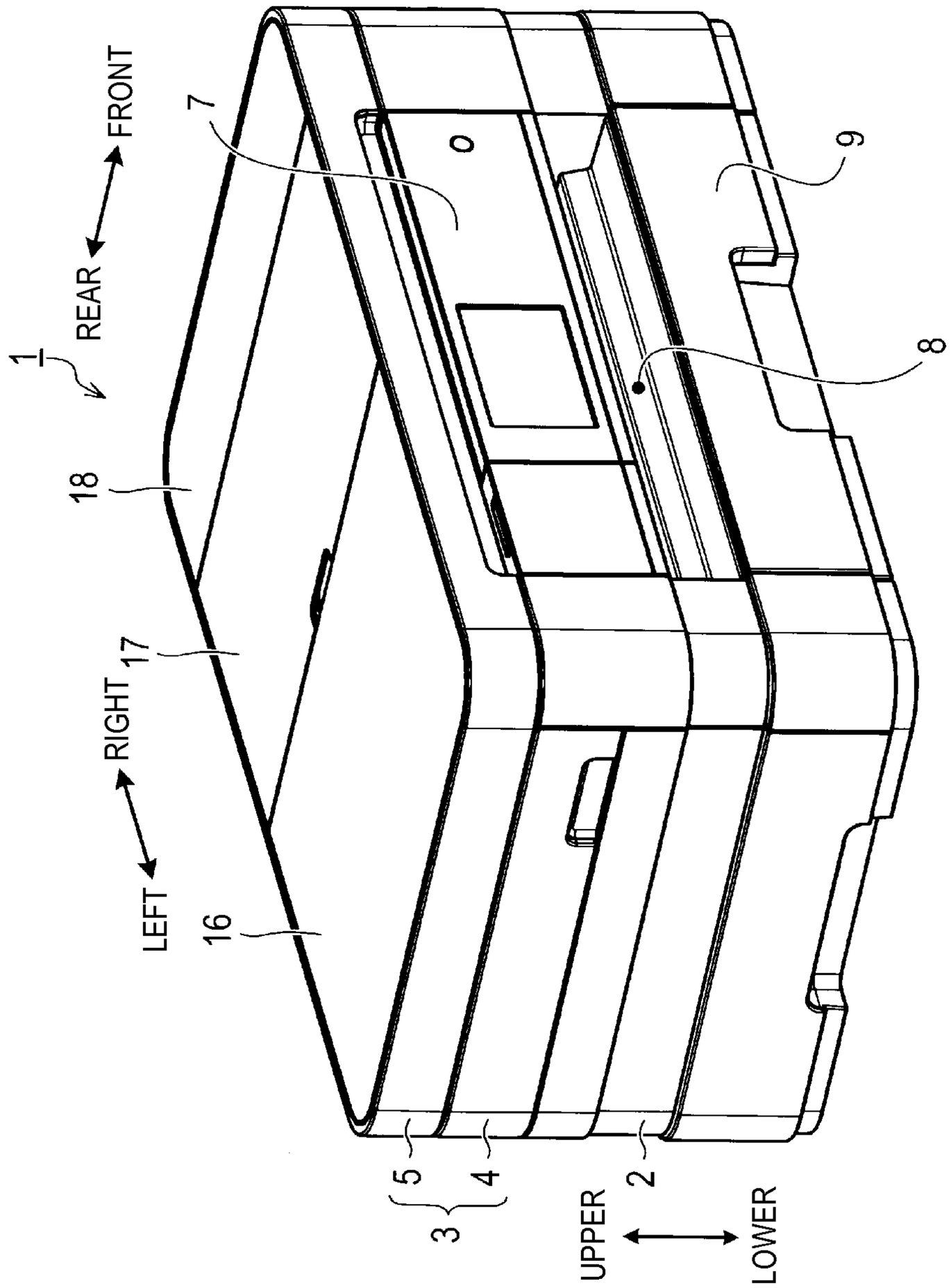
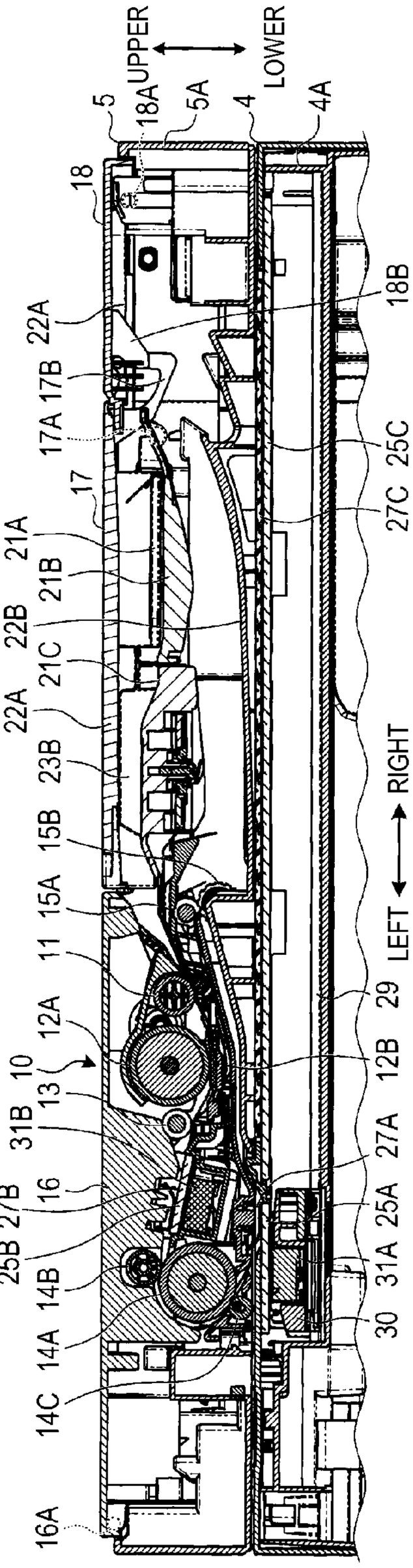


FIG. 1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18A
5A
4
4A
18
22A
18B
17A
17
21A
22B
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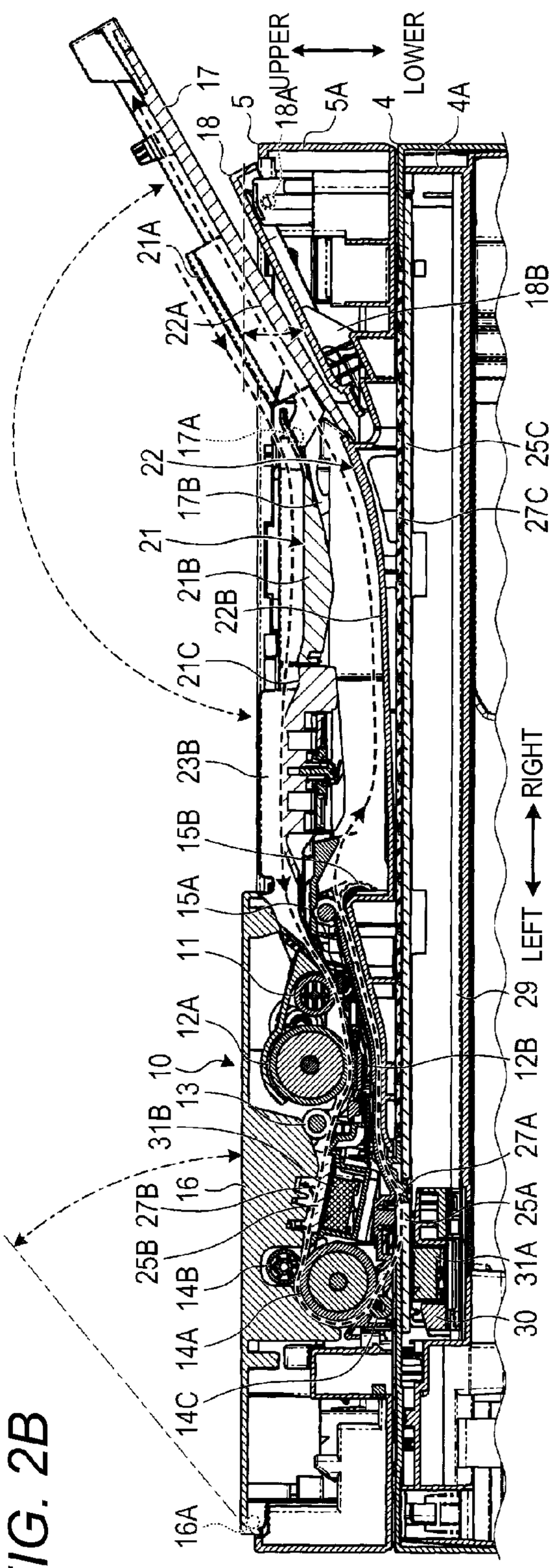
15B
15A
11
12A
10
13
31B
25B
27B
16
14B
14A
14C
16A
12B
29
27A
25A
31A
30
27C
25C
LEFT
RIGHT

FIG. 2A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21C
23B
15B
15A
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12A
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13
31B
25B
27B
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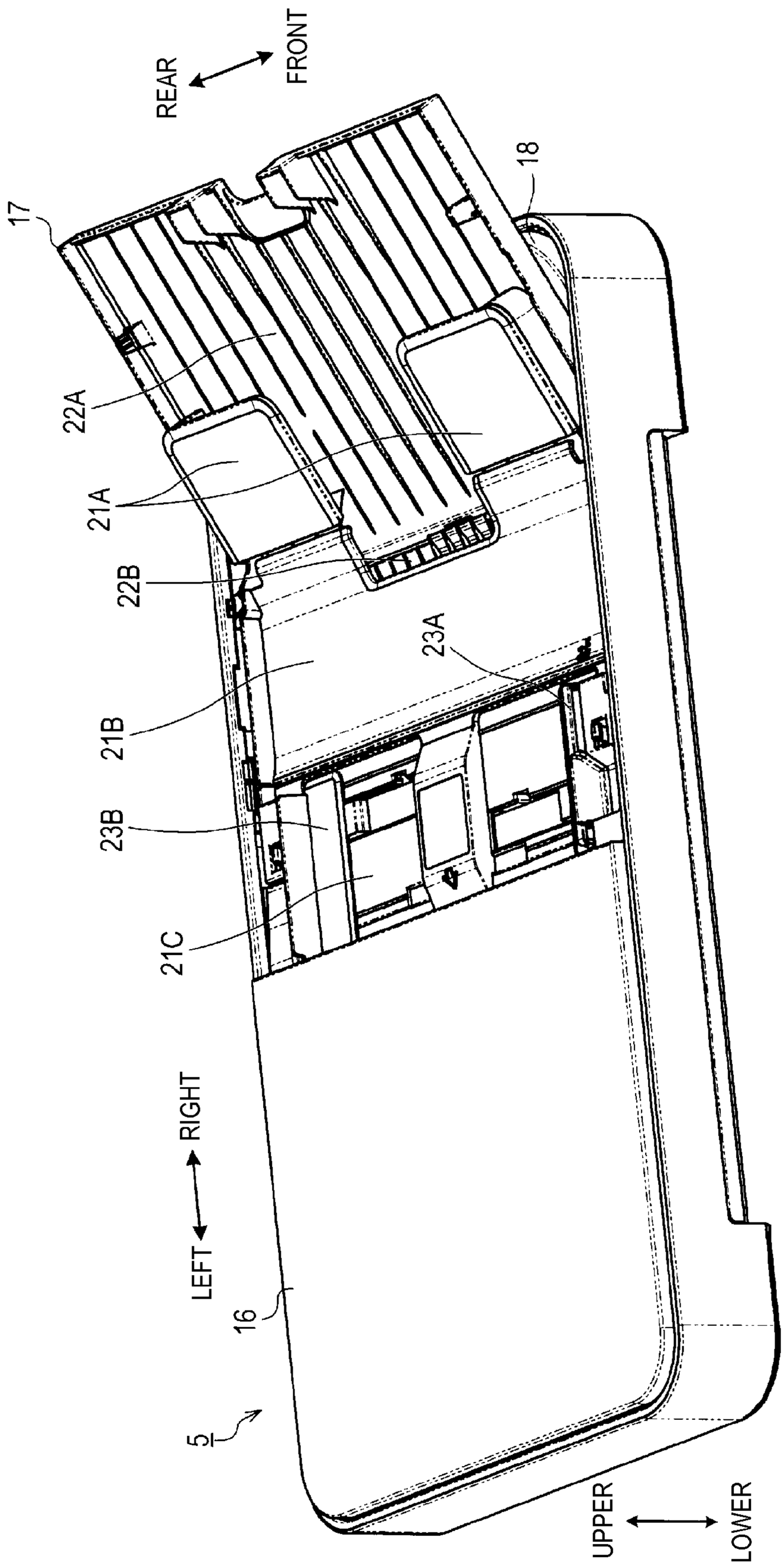
14B
14A
14C
16A
12B
29
27A
25A
31A
30
27C
25C
LEFT
RIGHT

FIG. 2B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FRONT
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18
22A
21A
22B
23A
21B
23B
21C
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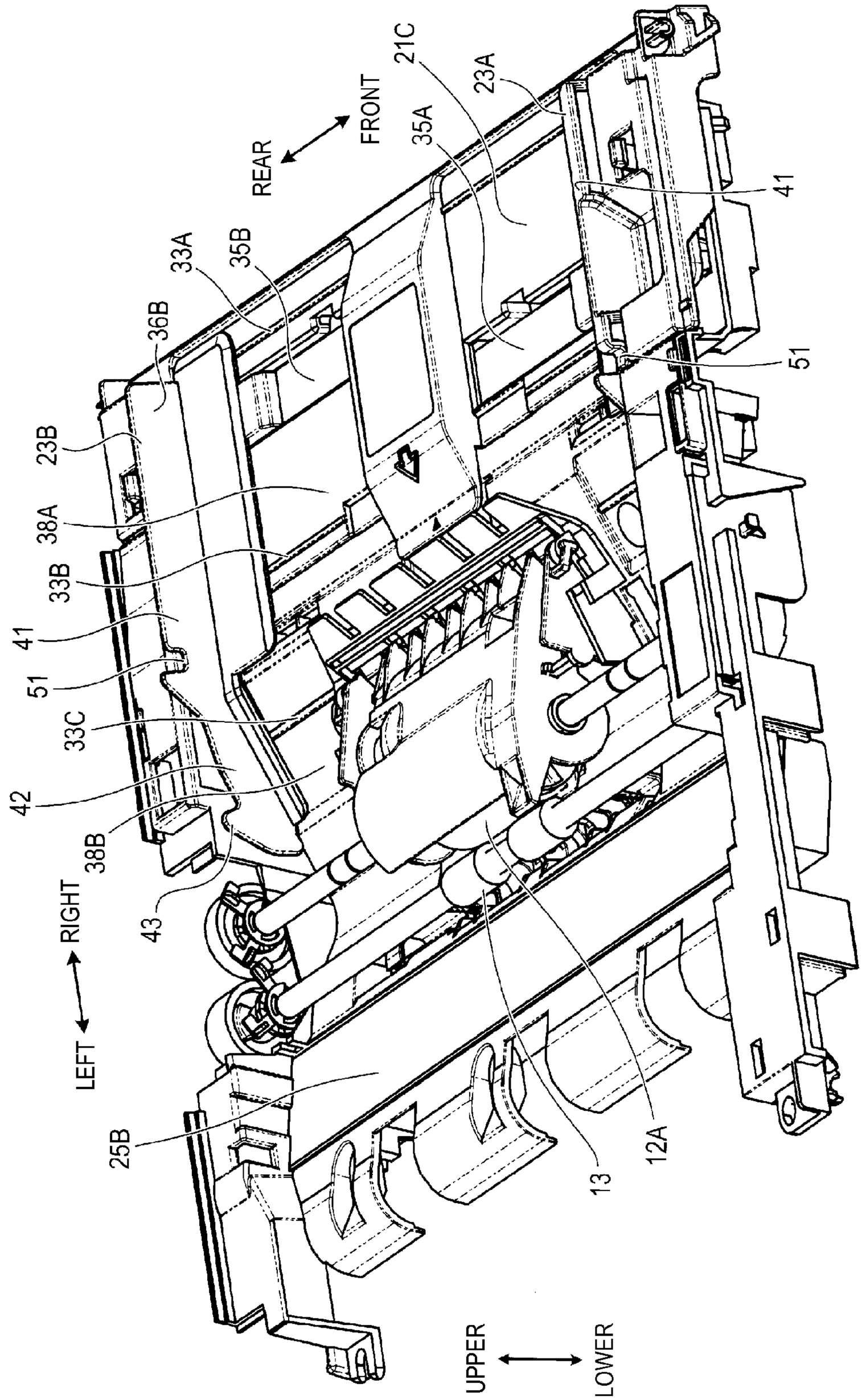
RIGHT
16
5
UPPER
LOWER

FIG. 3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33B
41
51
33C
42
38B
43
25B
13
12A
51

FIG. 4

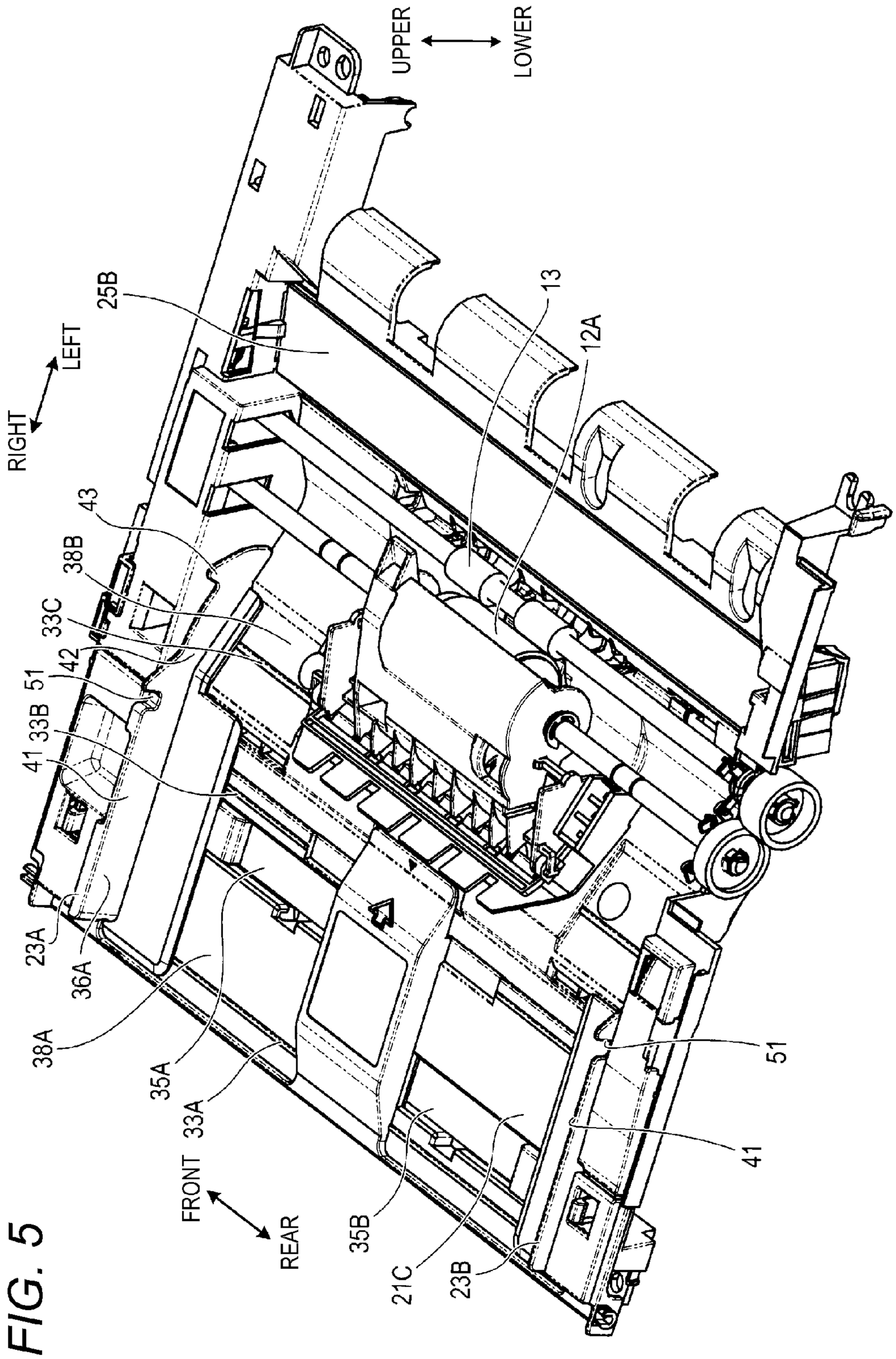
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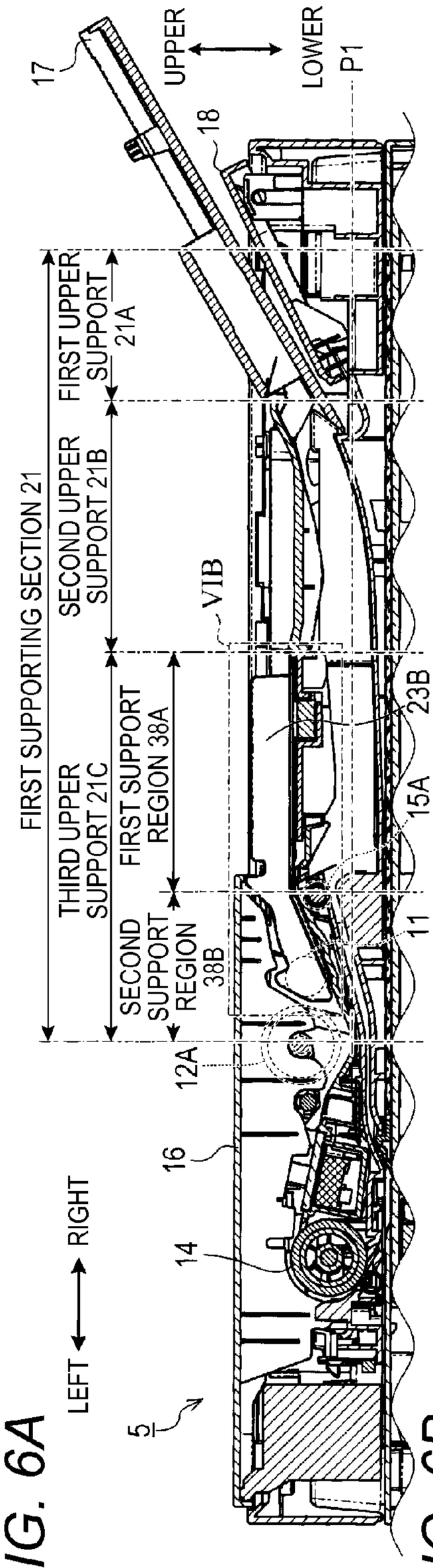
FIG. 5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P1
18
FIRST UPPER SUPPORT 21A
SECOND UPPER SUPPORT 21B
FIRST SUPPORTING SECTION 21
THIRD UPPER SUPPORT 21C
FIRST SUPPORT REGION 38A
SECOND SUPPORT REGION 38B
VIB
23B
15A
11
12A
16
14
5
LEFT
RIGHT

FIG. 6A

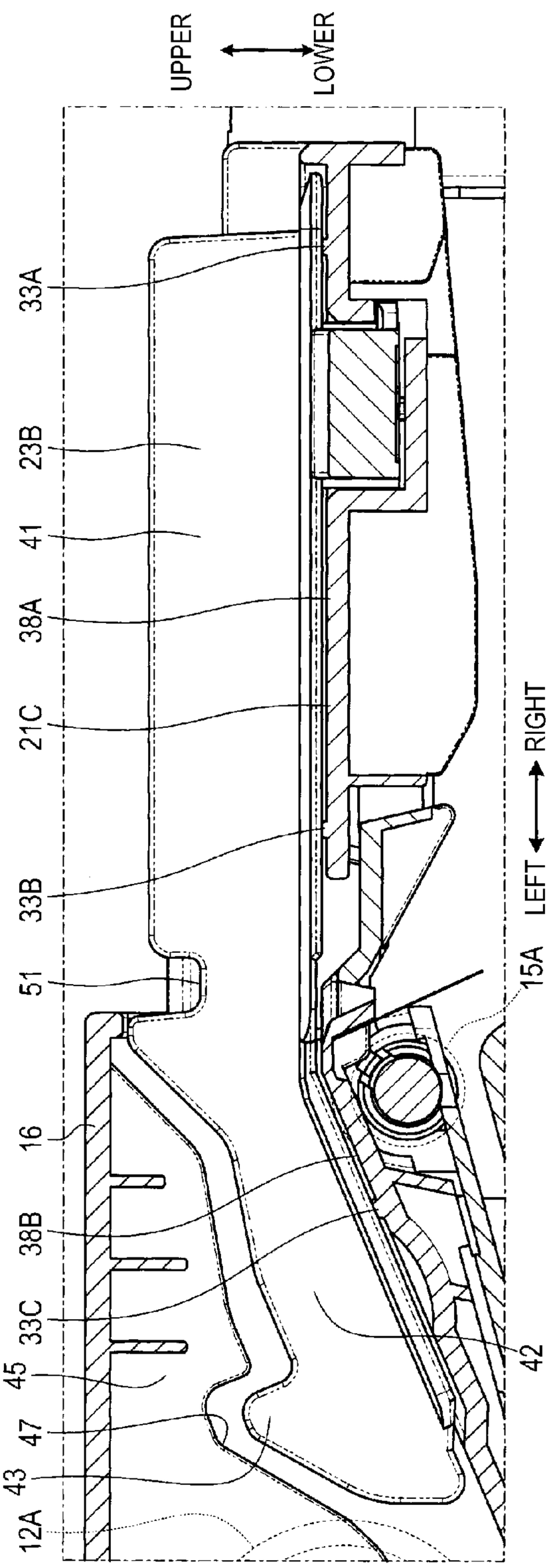
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FIG. 6B

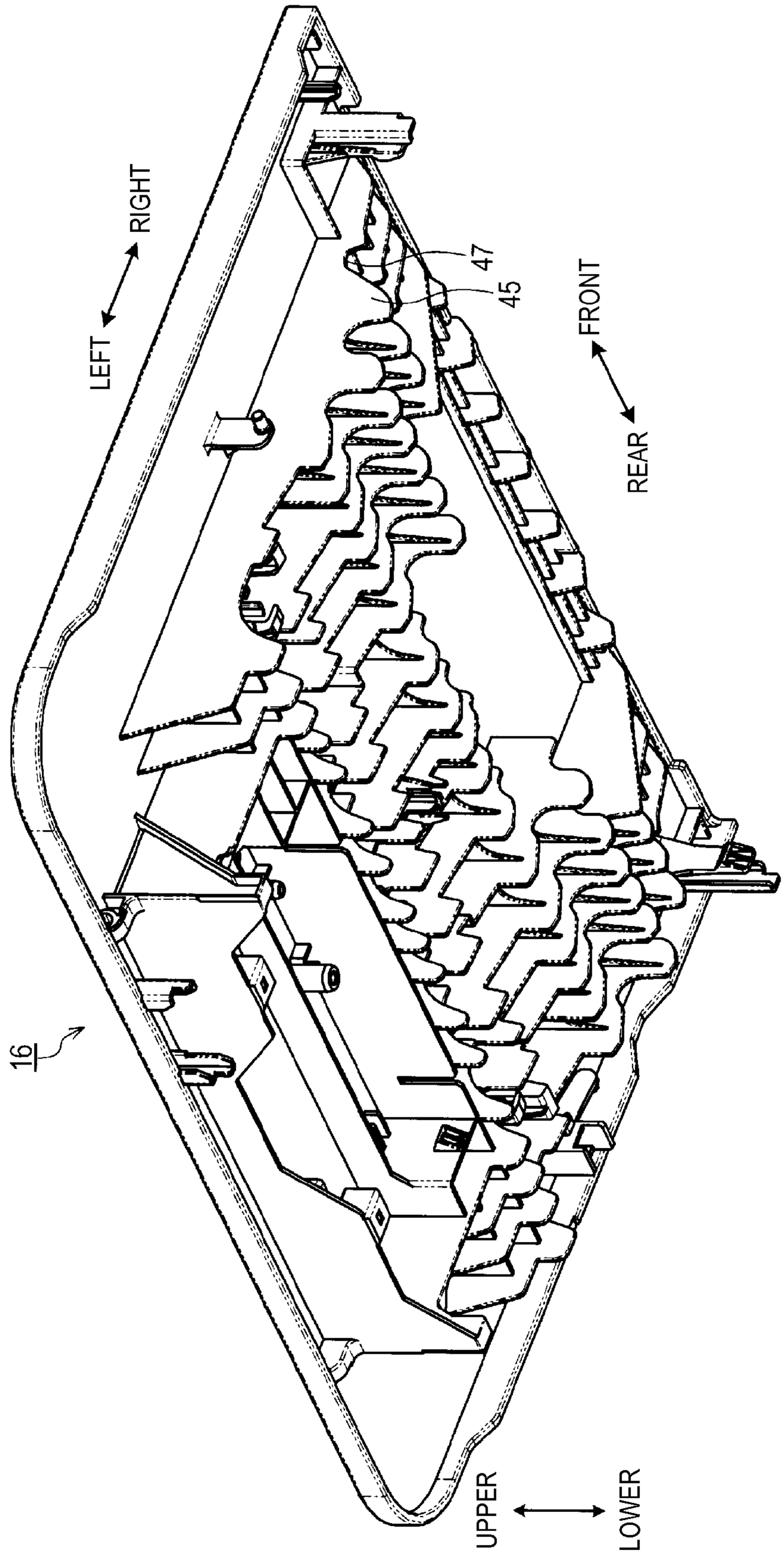


FIG. 7

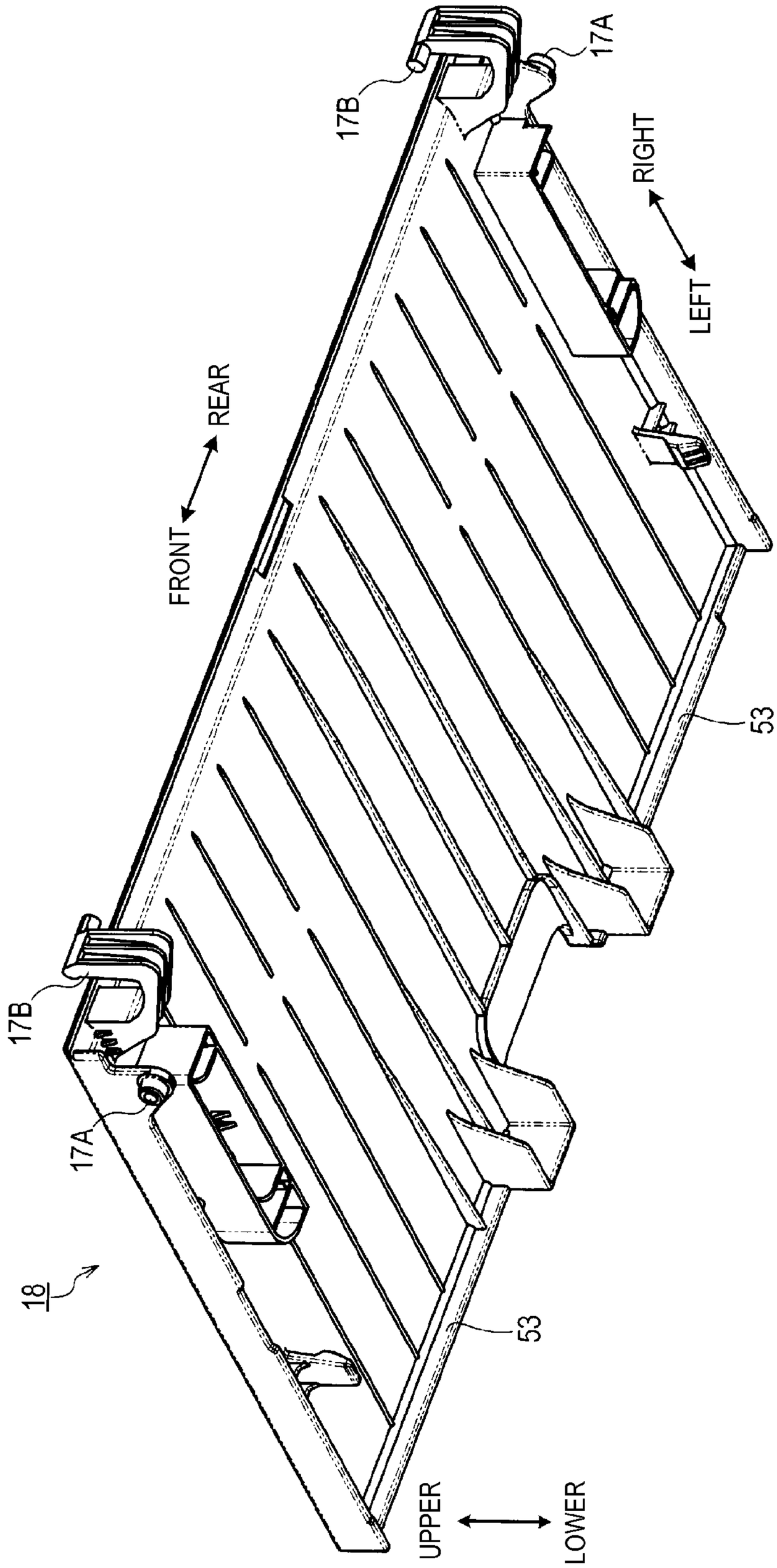
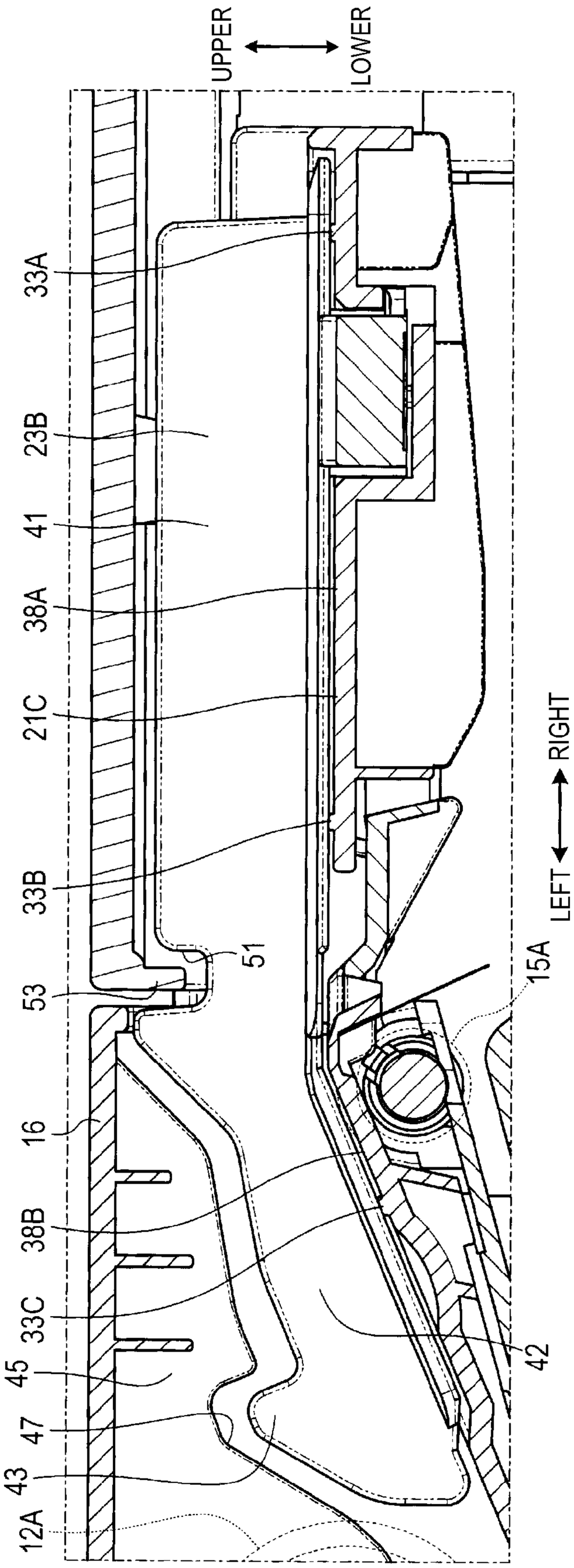


FIG. 8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12A
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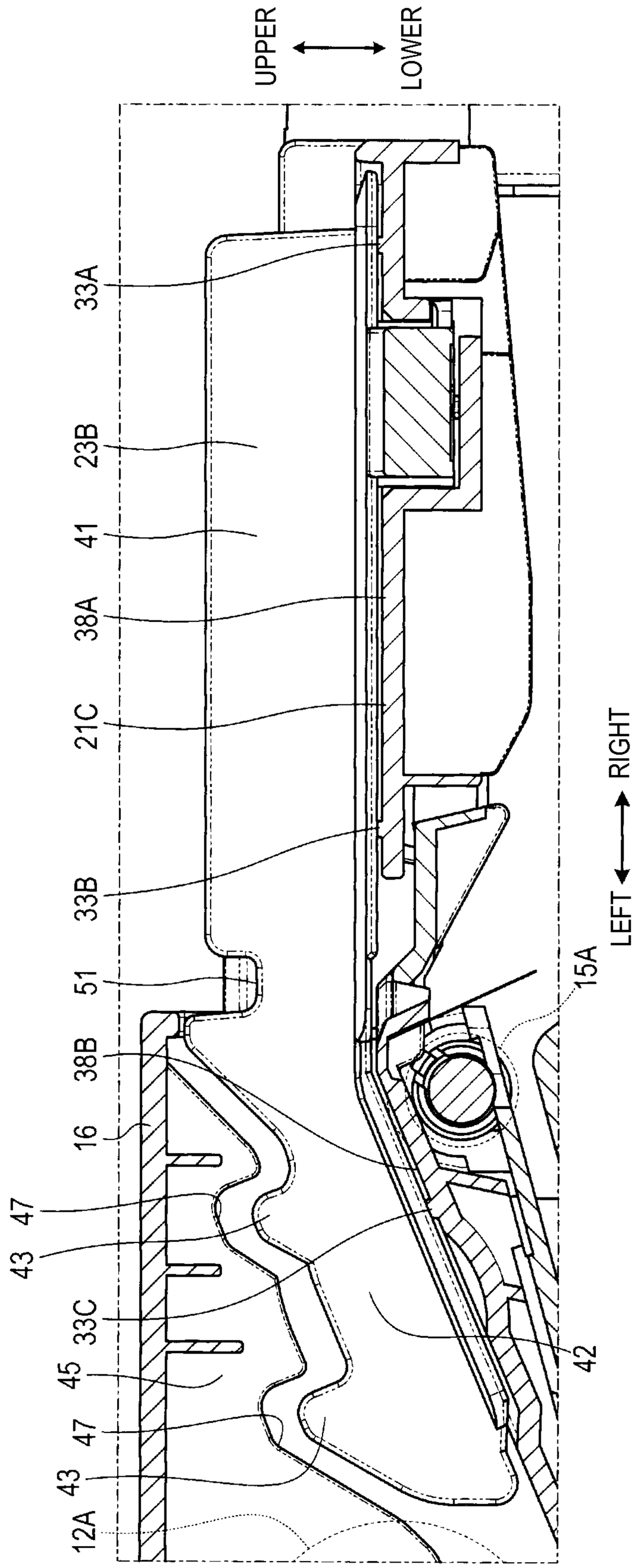
RIGHT
42

FIG. 9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38B
16
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33C
45
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43
12A
15A
LEFT
RIGHT
42

FIG. 10

SHEET CONVEYING DEVICE AND IMAGE READING DEVICE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims priority from Japanese Patent Application No. 2013-202227, filed on Sep. 27, 2013, the entire subject matter of which is incorporated herein by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The following disclosure relates to a sheet conveying device and an image reading device.

BACKGROUND

There has been known an image reading device which includes an automatic document feeder (ADF), wherein a sheet feed tray is entirely inclined from an upstream end to a downstream end in a sheet conveyance direction.

In this sheet feed tray, a dimension of the sheet feed tray from an upper end position to a lower end position in a height direction becomes large, which prevents a thickness-reduction of the device.

Here, although an inclination of the sheet feed tray is similar amount, if a full length of the sheet feed tray (a dimension in a direction parallel to the sheet conveyance direction) is reduced, it is possible to reduce the dimension of the sheet feed tray in the height direction. However, in this case, if a sheet having a long length in the sheet conveyance direction is loaded on the sheet feed tray, a portion of the sheet is likely to protrude.

SUMMARY

Accordingly, an aspect of the disclosure relates to a sheet conveying device and an image reading device which can secure an area sufficient for supporting a sheet and reduce a height dimension of a space necessary for securing the area.

In one aspect of the disclosure, a sheet conveying device includes a conveyor, a first supporting section and a guide section. The conveyor is configured to convey a sheet along a predetermined conveyance path in a conveyance direction. The first supporting section is configured to support a sheet to be fed to the conveyor, from a lower side of the sheet. The guide section is provided on the first supporting section and configured to guide a sheet to be fed from the first supporting section to the conveyor. The first supporting section includes a first support region and a second support region, each of which is configured to support a sheet. The first support region is provided at a position on an upstream side with respect to the second support region in the conveyance direction, and the second support region is provided at a position on a downstream side with respect to the first support region in the conveyance direction. The first support region extends substantially horizontally, and the second support region is inclined in a lower direction toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction. The guide section includes a first portion which extends substantially horizontally along the first support region, and a second portion which is connected to the first portion and extends obliquely in the lower direction along the second support region.

According to the above configuration, in the first supporting section and the guide section, portions on the upstream side in the conveyance direction extend substantially horizontally, whereas portions on the downstream side in the conveyance direction extend obliquely in a lower direction toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction. Therefore, the first supporting section reduces the height of the vicinity of the first support region as compared to a related-art device in which the whole of the first supporting section including a portion located on the upstream side in the conveyance direction is inclined. Therefore, it is possible to reduce the thickness of the device.

In another aspect of the disclosure, an image reading device includes a conveyor, a first supporting section, a guide section and a reading section. The conveyor is configured to convey a sheet along a predetermined conveyance path in a conveyance direction. The first supporting section is configured to support a sheet to be fed to the conveyor, from a lower side of the sheet. The second supporting section is configured to support a sheet discharged from the conveyor, from the lower side of the sheet. The guide section is provided on the first supporting section and configured to guide a sheet to be fed from the first supporting section to the conveyor. The reading unit is configured to read an image of a sheet conveyed by the conveyor. The first supporting section includes a first support region and a second support region, each of which is configured to support a sheet. The first support region is provided at a position on an upstream side with respect to the second support region in the conveyance direction, and the second support region is provided at a position on a downstream side with respect to the first support region in the conveyance direction. The first support region extends substantially horizontally, and the second support region is inclined in a lower direction toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction. The guide section includes a first portion which extends substantially horizontally along the first support region, and a second portion which is connected to the first portion and extends obliquely in the lower direction along the second support region.

According to the above configuration, the image reading device includes the configuration of the above-described sheet conveying device. Therefore, the first supporting section reduces the height of the vicinity of the first supporting section as compared to a related-art device in which the whole of the first supporting section including a portion located on the upstream side in the conveyance direction is inclined. Therefore, it is possible to reduce the thickness of the device.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a more complete understanding of the present disclosure, needs satisfied thereby, and the objects, features, and advantages thereof, reference now is made to the following illustrative descriptions taken in connection with the accompanying drawings.

FIG. **1** is a perspective view showing a multi-function device according to an illustrative embodiment;

FIGS. **2**A and **2**B are views showing an internal structure of an image reading device, wherein FIG. **2**A is a vertical cross-sectional view showing a state where a second cover of an ADF section is closed, and FIG. **2**B is a vertical cross-sectional view showing a state where the second cover is opened;

FIG. **3** is a perspective view showing the state where the second cover is opened;

FIG. **4** is a perspective view showing a rear side guide section and a surrounding structure;

FIG. **5** is a perspective view showing a front side guide section and a surrounding structure;

FIG. **6**A is a vertical cross-sectional view taken along a position where the rear side guide section can be seen, and FIG. **6**B is an enlarged view showing a vertical cross section of a portion VIB of FIG. **6**A;

FIG. **7** is a perspective view showing a first cover;

FIG. **8** is a perspective view showing the second cover;

FIG. **9** is a vertical cross-sectional view showing a portion including a protrusion formed at an end edge of the second cover and a contact prevention section formed on a guide section; and

FIG. **10** is a vertical cross-sectional view showing a portion including a guide section and a rib according to another illustrative embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Hereinafter, a sheet conveying device and an image reading device according to an illustrative embodiment will be described.

[Structure of Multi-Function Device]

A multi-function device **1** shown in FIG. **1** includes a configuration corresponding to a sheet conveying device and an image reading device according to an illustrative embodiment. In the following description, individual sections of the multi-function device **1** will be described with reference to directions, that is, an upper side, a lower side, a left side, a right side, a front side and a rear side shown in the drawings for simply explaining the relative positional relation among the individual sections.

The multi-function device **1** includes a main body unit **2**, and a reading unit **3** which is mounted on an upper side of the lower unit **2**. The reading unit **3** is attached to the main body unit **2** so as to be openable and closable. When the reading unit **3** is closed, an opening formed on an upper surface side of the main body unit **2** is closed by the reading unit **3**.

The reading unit **3** includes a flat bed section (hereinafter, referred to as FB section) **4**, and an ADF section **5** which is provided on an upper side of the FB section **4**. The ADF section **5** is attached to the FB section **4** so as to be openable and closeable. When the ADF section **5** is closed, the ADF section **5** functions as a cover for covering an upper surface side of the FB section **4**.

The main body unit **2** includes therein a control section, an image forming section, a LAN communication section, a PSTN communication section, and the like. At an upper front portion of the main body unit **2**, an operation panel **7** which can be operated by a user is provided. At a lower side of the operation panel **7**, an outlet **8** for taking out recording media having been subjected to image forming in the image forming section is formed. At a lower side of the outlet **8**, a medium feeding cassette **9** for storing recording media to be fed to the image forming section is provided.

In the reading unit **3**, the ADF section **5** includes a conveyor **10** configured to convey original documents along a predetermined conveyance path (see a path shown by a thick broken line in FIG. **2**B) as shown in FIGS. **2**A and **2**B. The conveyor **10** includes a feed roller **11**, a separation roller **12**A, a separation piece **12**B, a relay roller **13**, a conveying roller **14**A, an upper pinch roller **14**B, a lower pinch roller **14**C, a discharging roller **15**A, a discharge pinch roller **15**B, and so on. The conveyance path is defined by these various rollers, guide surfaces positioned between adjacent rollers, and the like.

At an upper surface of the ADF section **5**, a first cover **16**, a second cover **17** and a third cover **18** are provided as shown in FIGS. **1**, **2**A and **2**B. The first cover **16** is configured to be rotatable around a rotating shaft **16**A positioned in the vicinity of a left end of the first cover **16**, such that a right end side of the first cover **16** rises. The second cover **17** is configured to be rotatable around a rotating shaft **17**A positioned in the vicinity of a right end of the second cover **17**, between a storage position shown in FIG. **2**A and a use position shown in FIG. **2**B. The third cover **18** is configured to be rotatable around a rotating shaft **18**A positioned in the vicinity of a right end of the third cover **18**, between a horizontal position shown in FIG. **2**A and an inclined position shown in FIG. **2**B.

When the second cover **17** and the third cover **18** are positioned at the positions shown in FIG. **2**A, an arm **17**B extending from the second cover **17** is engaged to an arm receiver **18**B of the third cover **18**. That is, while the arm **17**B from the second cover **17** supports the third cover **18** from a lower side, the second cover **17** and the third cover **18** form a horizontal plane. Here, the horizontal plane which is formed by the second cover **17** and the third cover **18** is not limited to a perfectly flat plane, and may have some irregularities, or may include an inclined portion or the like. Further, from this state, if the second cover **17** is rotated from the storage position to the use position, the arm **17**B is moved toward a lower side, thereby pulling the vicinity of the left end of the third cover **18** to a lower side. As a result, in conjunction with the rotation of the second cover **17**, the third cover **18** rotates from the horizontal position shown in FIG. **2**A to the inclined position shown in FIG. **2**B.

If the second cover **17** rotates from the storage position to the use position, the third cover **18** reaches the inclined position before the second cover **17** reaches the use position. However, thereafter, the arm **17**B gets out from the arm receiver **18**B, whereby the second cover **17** reaches the use position without moving the third cover **18**. Meanwhile, if the second cover **17** rotates from the use position to the storage position, first, the second cover **17** rotates without moving the third cover **18**, and before the second cover **17** reaches the storage position, the arm **17**B enters the arm receiver **18**B. Then, the arm **17**B raises up the vicinity of the left end of the third cover **18** until the second cover **17** reaches the storage position. As a result, the third cover **18** rotates in conjunction with the second cover **17**, whereby the third cover **18** reaches the horizontal position substantially at the same time as the second cover **17** reaches the storage position.

When the second cover **17** is moved to the use position, in the ADF section **5**, a first supporting section **21** configured to support an original document to be fed to the conveyor **10**, from a lower side of the original document, and a second supporting section **22** configured to support an original document to be discharged from the conveyor **10** from a lower side of the original document are provided. The first supporting section **21** is provided on an upper side of the second supporting section **22**, and includes a first upper support **21**A, a second upper support **21**B and a third upper support **21**C. The second supporting section **22** is provided on a lower side of the first supporting section **21**, and includes a first lower support **22**A and a second lower support **22**B.

The first upper support **21**A is attached to the second cover **17** as shown in

FIGS. **2**A, **2**B and **3**, and rotates together with the second cover **17**. The second upper support **21**B is attached to a housing **5**A of the ADF section **5** so as to be openable and closeable. When the second upper support **21**B is opened, a portion of the second lower support **22**B positioned on a lower side of the second upper support **21**B is exposed. The third upper support **21**C is attached to the housing **5**A of the ADF section **5**. The first lower support **22**A is configured by one surface of the second cover **17**. The second lower support **22**B is configured by a bottom portion of the housing **5**A of the ADF section **5**.

On the third upper support **21**C, guide sections **23**A and **23**B are provided. The guide sections **23**A and **23**B are brought into contact with side ends of an original document so as to regulate the conveyance direction of the original document to be sent from the first supporting section **21**, to a predetermined direction.

Along the conveyance path shown by the thick broken line in FIG. **2**B, an original document set on the first supporting section **21** is conveyed, and is discharged onto the second supporting section **22**. At this time, the original document is sent from the first supporting section **21** toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction by the feed roller **11**, and then is separated one by one by the separation roller **12**A and the separation piece **12**B. Thereafter, each original document is further conveyed toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction by the relay roller **13** and the conveying roller **14**A, and is discharged onto the second supporting section **22** by the discharging roller **15**A.

Between the conveying roller **14**A and the discharging roller **15**A along the conveyance path, a first transparent section **25**A and a first document pressing member **27**A are provided. Also, between the relay roller **13** and the conveying roller **14**A along the conveyance path, a second transparent section **25**B and a second document pressing member **27**B are provided.

Specifically, the first transparent section **25**A is provided on the FB section **4** side, and the second transparent section **25**B, the first document pressing member **27**A and the second document pressing member **27**B are provided on the ADF section **5** side. In this illustrative embodiment, the first transparent section **25**A and the second transparent section **25**B are made of glass plates, and extend over a range wider than a width of an original document in a width direction (a front-rear direction in this illustrative embodiment) perpendicular to the conveyance direction.

The first document pressing member **27**A and the second document pressing member **27**B are formed of a metal or a hard resin material, and extend over a range wider than a width of an original document, similarly to the first transparent section **25**A and the second transparent section **25**B.

The first document pressing member **27**A is biased toward the first transparent section **25**A by a spring (not shown), thereby suppressing an original document passing while being in contact with the upper surface of the first transparent section **25**A from floating from the first transparent section **25**A. The second document pressing member **27**B is biased toward the second transparent section **25**B by a spring (not shown), thereby suppressing an original document passing while being in contact with the upper surface of the second transparent section **25**B from floating from the second transparent section **25**B.

Also, in the FB section **4**, a third transparent section **25**C is provided, and in the ADF section **5**, a third document pressing member **27**C is provided. In this illustrative embodiment, the third transparent section **25**C is made of glass plates, similarly to the first transparent section **25**A and the second transparent section **25**B. However, the third transparent section **25**C is different from the first transparent section **25**A and the second transparent section **25**B in that the third transparent section **25**C has a sufficiently large area to which the an original document to be subjected to image reading can be fit entirely.

The third document pressing member **27**C is made of a laminate of a foamed resin layer and a hard resin film layer. When the ADF section **5** is closed, the third document pressing member **27**C comes into close contact with the third transparent section **25**C side due to a slight elastic deformation, thereby suppressing an original document placed on the third transparent section **25**C from floating from the third transparent section **25**C.

In the FB section **4**, a guide rail **29**, a carriage **30**, a first image sensor **31**A (an example of a reading unit), and the like are provided. In the ADF section **5**, a second image sensor **31**B is provided. The guide rail **29** is formed integrally with an inner surface of a bottom portion of a housing **4**A of the FB section **4** and extends in a left-right direction of this illustrative embodiment in a range from a lower side of the first transparent section **25**A to a lower side of the third transparent section **25**C, in parallel to the lower surfaces of the first transparent section **25**A and the third transparent section **25**C.

The carriage **30** is mounted on the guide rail **29**, thereby being supported so as to be able to reciprocate in the left-right direction along the guide rail **29**. The carriage **30** is connected to a timing belt (not shown), and reciprocates in the left-right direction in conjunction with circulation of the timing belt.

In the present illustrative embodiment, as the first image sensor **31**A and the second image sensor **31**B, contact image sensors (CISs) are used. The first image sensor **31**A is mounted on the carriage **30**, and reciprocates in the left-right direction together with the carriage **30**.

Between the first image sensor **31**A and the second image sensor **31**B, a spring (not shown) is interposed. The spring **33**A biases the first image sensor **31**A in an upper direction. Also, in the vicinities of the front and rear ends of the first image sensor **31**A, spacers (not shown) are attached. The spacers are biased in an upper direction together with the first image sensor **31**A, thereby coming into contact with the lower surface of the third transparent section **25**C or the first transparent section **25**A.

Therefore, when the first image sensor **31**A reciprocates together with the carriage **30**, the spacers are kept in a state where the spacers are in contact with the lower surface of the third transparent section **25**C or the first transparent section **25**A, so the first image sensor **31**A moves while keeping a constant distance from the third transparent section **25**C or the first transparent section **25**A.

The second image sensor **31**B is disposed at a predetermined position, and does not move from the predetermined position. However, the second image sensor **31**B is biased toward the second transparent section **25**B by a spring (not shown). Therefore, the second image sensor **31**B also keeps a constant distance from the second transparent section **25**B.

A plurality of reading elements of each of the first image sensor **31**A and the second image sensor **31**B are arranged in the front-rear direction of this illustrative embodiment. In a case of reading an image of an original document placed on the upper surface of the third transparent section **25**C, the first image sensor **31**A reads an image while moving together with the carriage **30**.

Meanwhile, in a case of reading an image of an original document which is conveyed by the conveyor **10**, the first image sensor **31**A stops at a lower side of the first document pressing member **27**A and the first transparent section **25**A, and reads an image of the original document passing while being in contact with the upper surface of the first transparent section **25**A. The second image sensor **31**B is positioned on a lower side of the second document pressing member **27**B and the second transparent section **25**B, and reads an image of an original document passing while being in contact with the upper surface of the second transparent section **25**B.

[Details of Guide Sections]

Subsequently, the pair of guide sections **23**A and **23**B, and the surrounding structures of them will be described in detail. As shown in FIGS. **4** and **5**, the guide sections **23**A and **23**B

are provided on the third upper support **21**C corresponding to a portion of the first supporting section **21**, with an interval in the width direction (the front-rear direction in the drawings) perpendicular to the conveyance direction.

The guide sections **23**A and **23**B are configured to be relatively slidable in the front-rear direction with respect to the third upper support **21**C. On the upper surface of the third upper support **21**C, protrusions **33**A, **33**B and **33**C are formed, and the bottoms of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B are supported in a state where they are in contact with tip ends of the protrusions **33**A, **33**B and **33**C. Therefore, as compared to a case where those protrusions **33**A, **33**B and **33**C are not provided, the sliding friction on the bottom surfaces of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B becomes lower, and thus the guide sections **23**A and **23**B smoothly slide.

In the guide section **23**A, a rack **35**A is provided so as to extend toward the rear side, and in the guide section **23**B, a rack **35**B is provided so as to extend toward the front side. A single pinion (not shown) is provided at the center of the third upper support **21**C in the front-rear direction, such that the pinion is interposed between the racks **35**A and **35**B in the left-right direction, and the racks **35**A and **35**B are engaged with the pinion.

Accordingly, if any one guide section (for example, the guide section **23**A) of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B is slid, one rack (for example, the rack **35**A) rotates the pinion. If the pinion rotates, the pinion slides the other rack (for example, the rack **35**B) in the opposite direction to the sliding direction of the one rack. As a result, the other guide section (for example, the guide section **23**B) having the other rack slides on the pinion in the opposite direction to the sliding direction of the one guide section. The guide sections **23**A and **23**B have contact surfaces **36**A and **36**B facing each other in the front-rear direction, and guide an original document fed from the first supporting section **21** toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction along the contact surfaces **36**A and **36**B.

As shown in FIGS. **6**A and **6**B, the third upper support **21**C includes a first support region **38**A which extends substantially horizontally, and a second support region **38**B which is inclined in a lower direction toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction. As shown in FIG. **6**A, the discharging roller **15**A is disposed on the lower side of a range where the first supporting section **21** is provided, and on the upper side of the position P1 of the lower end of the second support region **38**B. The first cover **16** is an example of an upper cover. When the first cover **16** is at a closed position (the position shown in FIG. **2**A), the first cover **16** covers the upper side of the second support region **38**B, and when the first cover **16** is moved to an open position, the second support region **38**B is exposed.

As shown in FIGS. **4**, **5**, **6**A and **6**B, each of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B has a first portion **41** which extends substantially horizontally along the first support region **38**A, and a second portion **42** which is connected to the first portion **41** and extends obliquely in the lower direction along the second support region **38**B.

Also, as shown in FIGS. **4** and **5**, since the shapes of the first portion **41** and the second portion **42** of the guide section **23**A are substantially the same as those of the guide section **23**B, the following description will be made with reference to FIGS. **6**A to **10** showing the guide section **23**B disposed on the rear side.

In each of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B, an end portion of the second portion **42** on the downstream side in the conveyance direction (the left side in the drawings) extends to the vicinity of the separation roller **12**A as seen from the front side of the device. Also, in each of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B, at an upper edge of the second portion **42**, a regulating section **43** (an example of a first protrusion) is formed so as to protrude in the upper direction from the upper edge. If an original document is displaced in such a direction that the original document will exceed the upper edges of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B located at positions lower than the regulating sections **43**, the regulating sections **43** regulate that displacement.

On the upper side of the second support regions **38**B, the lower side of the first cover **16** is provided with ribs **45** which protrude toward the second support regions **38**B. In each of the rib **45**, an accommodating section **47** is formed in a recess shape according to the regulating section **43** protruding toward the rib **45**. As shown in FIG. **7**, the lower side of the first cover **16** is provided with a plurality of ribs **45** arranged in parallel. Of these ribs **45**, three foremost ribs **45** and three rearmost ribs **45** face moving ranges of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B and can interfere with the regulating sections **43**. In order to avoid this interference, the accommodating sections **47** are formed in those six ribs **45**.

At the upper edges of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B, as shown in FIGS. **6**A and **6**B, contact prevention sections **51** are formed in recess shapes extending in the lower direction. The contact prevention sections **51** are provided for preventing the second cover **17** from coming into contact with the guide sections **23**A and **23**B when the second cover **17** including the second supporting section **22** is moved to the storage position.

Specifically, at the position of the left end of the second cover **17** in a state where the second cover **17** is at the storage position, as shown in FIG. **8**, protrusions **53** (an example of a second protrusion) are provided such that they protrude toward the lower side (the first support region **38**A side). Since these protrusions **53** are provided, it is possible to improve the rigidity of the second cover **17** against bending or twisting.

When the second cover **17** is moved to the storage position, the protrusions **53** enter the contact prevention sections **51**, as shown in FIG. **9**. That is, the shapes and the like of the contact prevention sections **51** are set in view of the shapes and positions of the protrusions **53**.

[Effects]

In the above-described multi-function device **1**, the reading unit **3** and the ADF section **5** have the following effects. That is, in the third upper support **21**C and the guide sections **23**A and **23**B of the ADF section **5**, portions (the first support region **38**A and the first portion **41**) on the upstream side in the conveyance direction extend substantially horizontally. Meanwhile, portions (the second support region **38**B and the second portion **42**) on the downstream side in the conveyance direction extend obliquely in the lower direction toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction. Therefore, the first supporting section **21** having the above-described substantially horizontal portion reduces the height of the vicinity of the first support region **38**A as compared to a related-art device wherein the whole of the first supporting section **21** including a portion located on the upstream side in the conveyance direction is inclined. Therefore, it is possible to reduce the thickness of the device.

Further, in the ADF section **5**, if an original document is guided along the second portions **42** of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B, the original document reaches the separation roller **12**A in a state where the original document is conveyed in an appropriate conveyance direction in the vicinity of the separation roller **12**A. Therefore, as compared to a case where the guide sections **23**A and **23**B are provided at positions spaced

away from the separation roller **12**A, it is possible to improve an effect of suppressing skew of an original document.

Further, according to the above-described ADF section **5**, when a plurality of original documents are stacked on the first supporting section **21**, even if an original document is displaced in such a direction (direction perpendicular to the conveyance direction) that the original document exceeds the upper edges of the second portions **42** of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B, the end portion of the original document comes into contact with the regulating sections **43**, whereby displacement of the original document is regulated. Therefore, even if a lot of original documents are loaded on the first supporting section **21**, the uppermost original document is not likely to deviate to an unexpected position over the upper edges of the second portions **42**, so that it is possible to appropriately suppress shift or skew of the original document.

Also, according to the above-described ADF section **5**, even if an original document is displaced in such a direction that the original document exceeds the regulating sections **43** of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B, a range in which the original document can be displaced is regulated by the lower edges of the ribs **45**. Especially, since the convex regulating sections **43** are accommodated in the concave accommodating sections **47**, whereby protrusions and recesses are interlaced around the regulating sections **43** and the accommodating sections **47**, an original document cannot pass through the interlaced portion. Therefore, an effect of preventing an original document from deviating to an unexpected position over the regulating sections **43** is rather high, and it is possible to more surely suppress shift or skew of an original document.

Further, according to the above-described ADF section **5**, since the ribs **45** are formed on the first cover **16**, if the first cover **16** is moved to the closed position, the ribs **45** are disposed at predetermined positions. Therefore, between the second portions **42** of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B, an original document is conveyed while being pressed from the upper side by the ribs. Therefore, it is possible to suppress displacement of an original document in the vertical direction, thereby capable of conveying the original document in a stable state. Further, it is possible to suppress a range in which an original document can be displaced, by the lower edges of the ribs **45**.

Further, according to the above-described ADF section **5**, since the contact prevention sections **51** are provided, even if the protrusions **53** are provided on the first cover **16** including the second supporting section **22**, it is possible to prevent the protrusions **53** from coming into contact with the upper edges of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B. Therefore, as compared to a case of using guide sections **23**A and **23**B without such contact prevention sections **51**, even if the second supporting section **22** having the protrusions **53** is disposed at a lower position, it is possible to prevent interference between the protrusions **53** and the guide sections **23**A and **23**B, so that it is possible to reduce the thickness of the device.

Further, according to the above-described ADF section **5**, the guide sections **23**A and **23**B slide while being in contact with the tip ends of the protrusions **33**A, **33**B and **33**C (an example of a third protrusion). Therefore, as compared to a case where the guide sections **23**A and **23**B slide along a surface without those protrusions **33**A, **33**B and **33**C, it is possible to reduce the sliding friction on the guide sections **23**A and **23**B, and it is possible to improve the operability of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B.

Further, according to the above-described ADF section **5**, the discharging roller **15**A is disposed at a position higher than the lower ends of the second support regions **38**B extending obliquely in the lower direction toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction. Therefore, as compared to a case where the discharging roller **15**A is disposed at a position lower than the position of the lower end of the entire first supporting section **21**, it is possible to lower the height position of the first supporting section **21**, so that it is possible to reduce the thickness of the device.

[Other Illustrative Embodiments]

Although the sheet conveying device and the image reading device have been described above using the specific illustrative embodiment configured as the multi-function device **1**, the present invention is not limited to the above described illustrative embodiment, and the inventive concept of the present invention can be implemented in various forms without departing from the technical idea of the present invention.

For example, in the above-described illustrative embodiment, at each of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B, one regulating section **43** is provided, and in each rib **45**, one accommodating section **47** is formed accordingly. However, the number of regulating sections **43** or accommodating sections **47** is not limited to one. For example, as shown in FIG. **10**, at each of the guide sections **23**A and **23**B, a plurality of regulating sections **43** may be provided at the upper edge of the second portion **42**. In this case, in each rib **45**, a plurality of accommodating sections **47** may be formed at a plurality of positions corresponding to the plurality of regulating sections **43**, respectively.

According to this configuration, as compared to the case where each guide section has only a single regulating section **43**, it is possible to improve the effect of preventing an original document from deviating to an unexpected position over the regulating sections **43**.

Further, in the above-described illustrative embodiment, the reading unit **3** includes the first image sensor **31**A and the second image sensor **31**B. However, it is arbitrary whether the reading unit **3** includes any component corresponding to the second image sensor **31**B.

Further, in the above-described illustrative embodiment, a case where the reading unit **3** is assembled in the multi-function device **1** has been described. However, the above-described configuration may be applied to a mono-functional image scanner device.

What is claimed is:

1. A sheet conveying device comprising:

a conveyor which is configured to convey a sheet along a predetermined conveyance path in a conveyance direction;

a first supporting section which is configured to support a sheet to be fed to the conveyor, from a lower side of the sheet;

a second supporting section which is configured to support a sheet discharged from the conveyor, from the lower side of the sheet; and

a guide section which is provided on the first supporting section and configured to guide a sheet to be fed from the first supporting section to the conveyor,

wherein the first supporting section includes a first support region and a second support region, each of which is configured to support a sheet, and a third support region which is provided at a position on an upstream side with respect to both the first support region and the second support region in the conveyance direction,

wherein the first support region is provided at a position on an upstream side with respect to the second support region in the conveyance direction, and the second support region is provided at a position on a downstream side with respect to the first support region in the conveyance direction,

wherein the first support region extends substantially horizontally, and the second support region is inclined in a lower direction toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction,

wherein the guide section includes a first portion which extends substantially horizontally along the first support region, a second portion which is connected to the first portion and extends obliquely in the lower direction along the second support region, and a flat face portion which supports the sheet from a lower side of the sheet with the first supporting section and a side wall portion which stands upward from the flat face portion and guides an edge of the sheet,

wherein the flat face portion of the guide section has a first section that is provided within the first support region and a second section which is provided within the second support region,

wherein the second supporting section is configured to be movable between a storage position for covering an upper side of the first support region and a use position for exposing the first support region, and the second supporting section is configured to support a sheet discharged from the conveyor, from the lower side of the sheet, in a state where the second supporting section is at the use position,

wherein the second supporting section includes a second protrusion which protrudes toward the first support region in a state where the second supporting section is at the storage position, and

wherein an upper edge of the guide section is formed with a contact prevention section in a recess shape so as to prevent contact with the second protrusion in the state where the second supporting section is at the storage position.

2. The sheet conveying device according to claim **1**,

wherein the conveyor includes a separation roller which is configured to separate a plurality of sheets supported on the first supporting section one by one, and to send each sheet toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction, and

wherein an end portion of the second portion of the guide section on the downstream side in the conveyance direction extends to a vicinity of the separation roller.

3. The sheet conveying device according to claim **1**,

wherein the guide section includes a first protrusion which is provided on an upper edge of the second portion so as to protrude in an upper direction from the upper edge.

4. The sheet conveying device according to claim **3**,

wherein the first protrusion is configured to regulate a displacement of a sheet over the upper edge.

5. The sheet conveying device according to claim **1**,

wherein the guide section is attached to a part of the first supporting section so as to be slidable, and

wherein the part of the first supporting section is formed with a third protrusion extending in a sliding direction of the guide section at a position where the guide section slides.

6. The sheet conveying device according to claim **1**,

wherein the conveyor includes a discharging roller which is configured to discharge a conveyed sheet to the second supporting section, and

wherein the discharging roller is disposed at a position on a lower side with respect to the first supporting section and on an upper side with respect to a position of a lower end of the second support region.

7. The sheet conveying device according to claim **1**,

wherein the guide section includes a contact surface configured to come into contact with an end portion of a sheet supported by the first supporting section, in a width direction perpendicular to the conveyance direction.

8. The sheet conveying device according to claim **1**,

wherein the conveyor includes a discharging roller which is configured to discharge a conveyed sheet to a second supporting section which is configured to support a sheet discharged from the conveyor, from the lower side of the sheet, and

wherein the discharging roller is disposed at a position on a lower side with respect to the first supporting section and on an upper side with respect to a position of a lower end of the second support region.

9. A sheet conveying device comprising:

a conveyor which is configured to convey a sheet along a predetermined conveyance path in a conveyance direction;

a first supporting section which is configured to support a sheet to be fed to the conveyor, from a lower side of the sheet; and

a guide section which is provided on the first supporting section and configured to guide a sheet to be fed from the first supporting section to the conveyor,

wherein the first supporting section includes a first support region and a second support region, each of which is configured to support a sheet,

wherein the first support region is provided at a position on an upstream side with respect to the second support region in the conveyance direction, and the second support region is provided at a position on a downstream side with respect to the first support region in the conveyance direction,

wherein the first support region extends substantially horizontally, and the second support region is inclined in a lower direction toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction,

wherein the guide section includes a first portion which extends substantially horizontally along the first support region, and a second portion which is connected to the first portion and extends obliquely in the lower direction along the second support region,

wherein the guide section includes a first protrusion which is provided on an upper edge of the second portion so as to protrude in an upper direction from the upper edge,

wherein the first protrusion is configured to regulate a displacement of a sheet over the upper edge,

wherein on an upper side of the second support region, a rib is provided to protrude toward the second support region, and

wherein the rib is formed with an accommodating section in a recess shape according to the first protrusion protruding toward the rib such that the accommodating section accommodates the first protrusion.

10. The sheet conveying device according to claim **9**,

wherein the guide section includes a plurality of first protrusions which are provided on the upper edge of the second portion, and

wherein the rib is formed with a plurality of accommodating sections at positions corresponding to the plurality of first protrusions, respectively.

11. The sheet conveying device according to claim **9**, further comprising:

an upper cover which is configured to be movable between a closed position for covering the upper side of the second support region and an open position for exposing the second support region,

wherein the rib is formed on the upper cover at a position facing the second support region in a state where the upper cover is at the closed position.

12. An image reading device comprising:

a conveyor which is configured to convey a sheet along a predetermined conveyance path in a conveyance direction;

a first supporting section which is configured to support a sheet to be fed to the conveyor, from a lower side of the sheet;

a second supporting section which is configured to support a sheet discharged from the conveyor, from the lower side of the sheet;

a guide section which is provided on the first supporting section and configured to guide a sheet to be fed from the first supporting section to the conveyor; and

a reading unit which is configured to read an image of a sheet conveyed by the conveyor,

wherein the first supporting section includes a first support region and a second support region, each of which is configured to support a sheet, and a third support region which is provided at a position on an upstream side with respect to both the first support region and the second support region in the conveyance direction,

wherein the first support region is provided at a position on an upstream side with respect to the second support region in the conveyance direction, and the second support region is provided at a position on a downstream side with respect to the first support region in the conveyance direction,

wherein the first support region extends substantially horizontally, and the second support region is inclined in a lower direction toward the downstream side in the conveyance direction,

wherein the guide section includes a first portion which extends substantially horizontally along the first support region, a second portion which is connected to the first portion and extends obliquely in the lower direction along the second support region, and a flat face portion which supports the sheet from a lower side of the sheet with the first supporting section and a side wall portion which stands upward from the flat face portion and guides an edge of the sheet,

wherein the flat face portion of the guide section has a first section that is provided within the first support region and a second section which is provided within the second support region,

wherein the second supporting section is configured to be movable between a storage position for covering an upper side of the first support region and a use position for exposing the first support region, and the second supporting section is configured to support a sheet discharged from the conveyor, from the lower side of the sheet, in a state where the second supporting section is at the use position,

wherein the second supporting section includes a second protrusion which protrudes toward the first support region in a state where the second supporting section is at the storage position, and

wherein an upper edge of the guide section is formed with a contact prevention section in a recess shape so as to prevent contact with the second protrusion in the state where the second supporting section is at the storage position.

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